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FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9252  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0265  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0261  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 6653  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000757

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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS - SITREP 1

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¶1. (U) SUMMARY: General balloting in Nigeria's Presidential and National Assembly elections is yet to get underway as of 1130 local time. Some stations report a few ballots cast, but others report only the potential for balloting later in the day. No serious security incidents reported at this time, but there has been some sporadic and isolated confrontation due to errors in the ballot papers and absence of voting materials or officials. In some places, INEC is reportedly using the runoff ballots instead of the freshly printed ballots expected from South Africa, and errors on the ballot papers are reported throughout the country. In some places, we have reports of ballots going only to PDP operatives rather than polling places. Yenagoa, the scene of a large militant operation on the night of April 20, is reported calm with a heavy military presence, and the attack on INEC headquarters in Abuja reported by the international media may be less than it appears. It is too early, and voting has not begun in enough locations, to say what the mood will be during and after the elections. END SUMMARY.

LOGISTICS

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¶2. (U) The balloting in Nigeria's Presidential and National Assembly elections is yet to get generally underway as of 1130 local time. Some stations report ballots cast, but others report only potential for voting later in the day. Mission observers report throughout the country that ballots have been delivered to INEC offices (through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) local offices) and distribution to polling places was beginning by about 1130. Mission observers report about 30 percent of registered voters in many places throughout the country lined up and patiently (for the most part) waiting. In Lagos and most of the Niger Delta region, lines are by and large significantly shorter.

SECURITY

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¶3. (U) No serious security incidents have been reported at this time, but there have been some sporadic and isolated incidents due to errors in the ballot papers and absence of voting materials or officials. Reports indicate that INEC offices have been destroyed in Daura (Katsina state) and

Keffi (Nasarawa state) over non-supply or shortages of materials. A group of about 200 angry voters in Kaduna became violent, forcing RSO vehicles to exit the area. In Enugu, Mission observers have reported some harassment similar to EU Observer reports collected after last weeks elections, including restricting of movement and turning away from particular areas. For now, this appears isolated to this area and is probably attributable to overzealous security agents manning the numerous roadblocks.

#### INEC STORIES

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¶4. (U) Mission observers report that INEC is using runoff ballots instead of the freshly printed ballots expected from South Africa. These ballots contain only party name and symbol instead of the candidate's names and photographs and are delivered in cartons marked "Runoff Ballots." Errors on the ballot papers have forced the postponement of some National Assembly elections in Abia, Lagos, Oyo, Kaduna, Rivers, and Delta. In most cases, the reason was omission of candidates from the ballot. In the case of Kaduna, the cancellation was due to a call from INEC headquarters in Abuja, and no reason was given.

#### POLITICAL INFLUENCE

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¶5. (U) In some places, we have reports of ballots going only to PDP operatives rather than to polling places. Mission observers in Benue state report that poll materials are being distributed to local government officials, at which point they are taken away to undisclosed locations rather than to the polling units. An NGO in Rivers state and local observers in Delta state report that all poll workers at the few stations that are open are "known members of the PDP"

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connected directly to the State governments. In Rivers states, the NGO representative reports that no opposition party agents are at any of the sites and that they are being "actively discouraged" from going by police and polling agents.

#### YENAGOA AND ABUJA ATTACKS

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¶6. (U) Yenagoa, the scene of a large militant operation on the night of April 20, is reported calm with a heavy military presence. Reports vary, but indications are that at least 100, and as many as 200, militants attacked the police station, the INEC office and the Governors house in the capital of Bayelsa state on the night of April 20. Official statements claim the goal was to kidnap PDP's Vice Presidential candidate (and current Governor of Bayelsa) Goodluck Jonathan. Militant sources claim the goal was the kidnapping of Governor-elect Timipre Silva and creating enough confusion that the "sham elections of April 14" could not be repeated.

¶7. (U) The attack on INEC headquarters in Abuja may be less than it appears in international media reports. Observers at the scene question the ability of a lamppost to stop a fully loaded tanker on a downhill roll. They also point out that the "gas cannisters" (LP gas tanks similar to those on barbecue grills) that were allegedly set to explode the tanker and were supposedly burning when "security" halted the attack were not near the truck and showed no signs of scorching. Also, we have no evidence of any foam or other material that would have been required to extinguish such flames.

#### COMMENT

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¶8. (U) It is too early, and voting has not begun in enough

locations, to say what the mood will be during and after the elections. It is worth noting, however, that the major violence in the Gubernatorial elections took place at the announcement of results rather than the balloting itself.

CAMPBELL